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her senses; then gradually the truth dawned upon me. "Then you're not studying botany!"

"No, Dear, I'm learning a business. I'm already designing. I expect to have my own establishment next year."

I just wanted to sit down and weep. I felt that I could never forgive her, never, never! She caught me to her and pressed her cheek against mine.

never! She caught me to her and pressed her cheek against mine.

"Don't be angry, Dear. I couldn't let you do all the work. And, Loulie, I simply couldn't bear the idea of teaching!"

"Teaching—fiddlesticks!" I snapped.

"Dressmaking—more fiddlesticks! I wanted you to have your course in botany, and I'm so disappointed I'll never get over it!"

She calmly turned and picked up my list of entries without trying to console me. She

of entries without trying to console me. She knew I'd get over it. She ran her forefinger down the page. "Knew the Duke abroad," she read. "Which Duke, the Due d'Aubigny, or the Due de Trouville?"

"Why, the Due de Trouville," I answered irritably. "Whatever made you think it was the Due d'Aubigny?"

"Why, the Due de 'Whatever made you think it was the Due d'Aubigny?"
"Oh, I think of silly things like that sometimes," she replied. She stood so still for so very long while her eyelashes swept her cheeks that I began to fidget.

checks that I began to fidget.

"Did Miss Sargent absolutely identify the emerald bracelet as her own?" she asked

WHEN we came into the drawing room
Hap was lounging near the door waiting for me, quizzically regarding the animated circle of which his Grace was the center. John was all the way across the room sitting near one of the open windows; but when he saw us he stared, got up, nearly upsetting a table, and, upon my soul! I believe he would have rudely interrupted the Duke's involved speech over Jo's hand if I hadn't interfered.

Her an olive. I think from his expression that his Grace was a bit scandalized at the proceeding.

"I'm trying to devise a method of protecting what I have left," Natalie drawled; "but, "she paused for a moment effectively, "I shall not tell it."

The rebuke was accepted good naturedly; but the conversation about thieves and jewels ended, at least as far as the women were concerned, when Mrs. Cutler remarked: "I have a new hat, a perfect beauty! It

Duke's involved speech over Jo's hand h' hadn't interfered.

"My sister, Miss Codman, Mr. Crowninshield," I said in a hurry, for fear he would actually kiss her before I got them introduced—John, who never looked twice at a woman in his life!

Jo gave him her hand and smiled. "Mr. Crowninshield," she murmured in the most approved tone. Jo was never cut out for a dressmaker.

dressmaker.

"Why didn't you tell me?" John complained, and somehow our Duke drifted into the background.

Jo's answer I did not catch. I wondered the

Jo's answer I did not catch. I wondered what on earth John was talking about. He tried to maneuver her to a scat; but I came forward quickly.

"I want you to meet Miss Abercrombie, Dear," I said, and drew her toward Lydia; and all the while I was aching to get her to myself and ask her a few plain questions.

I was terribly upset. I dien't intend to have John falling in love with her; and he was doing it, for he was looking at her just as moony as Hap looks at me. She couldn't marry him any more than I could marry Hap, especially now with this dressmaking nonsense, and I wasn't going to have those gorgeous eyes spoiled. It was all right for me to cry; but not Jo!

IT was a horrid dinner party. Laura didn't come down, which reminded everybody of Winthrop; Natalie was late; Mrs. Hazard was plainly worried, and Natalie's vacant chair added another pucker to her brow. Hap was silly, and kept trying to hold my hand under the table; and I was cross and didn't dare show it.

hand under the table; and I was cross and didn't dare show it.

Natalie was shockingly late. She didn't come in until after the fish; but she was not in the least disturbed. She drifted to her place, all aglitter with her iewels, which was most unusual—iewels were saved for occasions. Everybody noticed them; but Natalic chose to be unconscious of the stir her late, dazzling entrance had caused.

Hap spoke across the table to her when she sait down. "Good morning," he said, laushing.

she sat down. "Good morning," he said, laughing.

Everything was rather hushed and still except for the clatter of dishes and silver as the course was changed, and everybody heard it. Everybody tittered,—everybody but the Duke, who didn't understand it, and Jo, who was never so undignified as to titter.

"I had rather wear them than lose them, Dear," Natalie drawled in answer to a question Lydia smilingly flung at her when the laugh subsided. "Who knows when our North Shore thieves will descend upon Lone Oak?"

Oak?"
"Don't worry, my dear," Mrs. Hazard assured her. "There will be a detective here tomorrow to look after us all."
"Detective!" shrieked Lydia. "How in-

eresting!"
"Dee-tec-teeve!" repeated his Grace,

struggling with his pronounciation. "For why have we ze dec-tec-teeve?"

"For precaution, your Grace," Mrs. Higginson answered him. "We Americans believe in locking the stable before the horse is stalen."

His Grace gazed at her amazed. Poor little Duke! I wished that I could have been near to explain it in French. I don't know how he interpreted it.

"Well, I'm not afraid of thieves," Lydia declared. "I always put my things in a stocking and toss it carelessly near my slippers under the bed. It's the last place on earth a thief would look for anything. That's Abercrombie system! Clever, isn't it?"

"Oh, Mother keeps hers in a shoe now," Dorothy burst in naively.

"I've changed again," Mrs. Abercrombie laughed. "Under the pillow. It's so old it may be new."

may be new."

"I've changed too," Dorothy admitted.

"I'd rather lose everything than be scared to death with 'Your money or your life!' So I put half of what I possess in plain sight on the dressing table and hope Mr. Thief will think that's all and go away satisfied without waking me. Isn't that elever?"

"Next!" Hap called, and everybody applauded.

"Next! Hap called, and everyondy applianced.

"Did Miss Sargent absolutely identify the emerald bracelet as her own?" she asked finally.

"Absolutely. It puts Winthrop in an awful hole, and, Jo, Winthrop never took that bracelet! He's not a thief; he's a dear, and there's a horrible mistake somewhere!"

WHEN we came into the drawing room

"Next! Hap called, and everyondy applianced.

"I think we have the best scheme of all,"

Mrs. Higginson ventured. "I have presumably a hot water bottle; but really it's a chamois bag. No thief would ever think of looking for jewels in a hot water bottle.

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"I have a new hat, a perfect beauty! It came on the last express!"

and what it looked like.

I make a new nat, a perfect beauty! It came on the last express!"

And everybody wanted to know the color and what it looked like.

## Chapter XX.

I THOUGHT I knew Jo. I don't. She had either changed since we separated, or there were latent qualities in her that I never suspected. She had never been curious, especially about things that were none of her business; but she linked her arm through mine as we went toward the drawof her business we went toward the draw-ing room after dinner.

"Who is the Duke in love with?" she

wanted to know " I replied.

"Natalic," I replied.
"Not wants to marry," she qualified, "but res for—loves?"

"If you mean anything horrid, clandes-tine, why I don't know anything about it, and I don't think you have any business thinking such things." Shemerely smiled at my outburst. "Isthere a picture gallery here?" she asked presently.

Shemerely smiled at my outburst. "Is there a picture gallery here?" she asked presently. "Yes. Why?"
"Oh, no reason particularly. There always is in these houses, isn't there?"
"No, there always isn't. Everybody I know execut the Heaver's house and the heaver's house execution."

know except the Hazards have their pictures

in town."
"Loulie, what was the name of the German
Count who took us to the spring exhibition?"
"Count Felix von Brunner," I answered

promptly.

promptly.

"Of course!" she exclaimed. "I've racked my brain for an hour trying to think of it."

I turned about and faced her. "Now look here, Jo, you are making me crazy with curiosity! You've asked me three questions for no reason on earth that I can see, and I

want to know why!"

"And you haven't asked me the one question I expected you to ask." Jo smiled quiz-

tion I expected you to ask. Jo sinued quasically.

Suddenly I thought of it. "Where did you know John?" I demanded.

"He has a client who wants to buy our stock in the mine," she answered, "a client who thinks he can pump it dry."

"Can it be done, Jo?"

"I don't know." She laughed outright at my excitement. "He wants to buy up all the stock. He can get it cheap, except ours. He offers us five thousand dollars for it. It's worth nothing unless the mine is pumped. Odd, wasn't it. Mr. Crowninshield never guessed who I was? And of course I didn't tell him."

"Gracious me!" I exclaimed, rather breath-is at the prospect. "What does Mr. Parless at the prospect, tridge say?" "Sell."

"Well, what are you-we-going to do,

"I'd rather have the income," she answered.
"But there isn't any," I pointed out.
"If a man knows—and he does, know,





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